

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 STOCKH 04141 211330Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

/060 W

----- 015233

R 211230Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5450

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 4141

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: LIBERAL LEADER RESIGNS

1. LIBERAL PARTY CHAIRMAN GUNNAR HELEN ANNOUNCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AUGUST 19 THAT HE PLANNED TO RESIGN HIS POST (WHICH HE HAS HELD SINCE 1969) AT THE PARTY CONGRESS NEXT NOVEMBER. THE ANNOUNCEMENT IMMEDIATELY PROVOKED SPECULATION IN SWEDISH POLITICAL CIRCLES RE THE LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO HELEN, WITH 36 YEAR-OLD M.O. PER AHLMARK WEIDELY REGARDED AS THE FRONT RUNNER.

2. ALTHOUGH HELEN GAVE REASONS OF HEALTH AS THE CAUSE OF HIS RESIGNATION, WE BELIEVE THE MAIN REASON FOR HIS DEPARTURE TO BE THE POOR SHOWING OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IN RECENT YEARS UNDER HIS LACKLUSTER LEADERSHIP. DURING THE TIME OF HIS CHAIRMANSHIP, THE PARTY CONTINUED TO DECLINE IN POPULAR SUPPORT FROM ITS POSITION IN THE LATE 1960'S AS THE LARGEST OPPOSITION PARTY TO ITS CURRENT STATUS AS THE SMALLEST OF THE THREE PARTIES, WITH A STANDING IN THE POLLS OF ONLY SEVEN PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE. ONE OF THE CHIEF FACTORS IN THE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 STOCKH 04141 211330Z

PARTY'S LOW STANDING HAS BEEN ITS LACK OF WHAT IS REFERRED TO

IN SWEDISH POLITICAL CIRCLES AS A "PROFILE". THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT CONTAINS SO MANY DISPARATE ELEMENTS, RANING FROM A FACTION COMPOSED OF CONSERVATIVE, STRONGLY FREE ENTERPRISE-ORIENTED INDUSTRIALISTS AND BUSINESSMAN, TO A RADICAL YOUTH WING, WHICH HAS CALLED FOR INCREASED NATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRY AND ABOLISHMENT OF THE MONARCHY, AND TO ITS EQUIVOCAL POSTURE OF PARTIAL COOPERATION WITH THE RULING SOCIALISTS, DESCRIBED BELOW.

3. FOLLOWING THE LIBERALS' POOR SHOWING IN THE 1973 ELECTIONS, WHEN THEY GARNERED NINE PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND 34 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, HELEN IN THE SPRING OF 1974 SIGNED THE SO-CALLED "HAGA AGREEMENT" WITH PRIME MINISTER PALME IN WHICH THE LIBERALS AGREED TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT ON KEY ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ISSUES, HOWEVER, HELEN RECEIVED LITTLE IN RETURN FOR HIS SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT (OTHER THAN KIND WORDS FROM PALME), AND CRITICISM OF HIS LEADERSHIP INCREASED AS THE PARTY ABANDONED ITS ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION WITHOUT IN FACT BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT. DISSATISFACTION WITH HELEN WAS PARTICULARLY STRONG AMONG THE INDSTRIALIST AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE LIBERAL STRONGHOLD IN SWEDEN'S SECOND CITY, GOTHENBURG. LIBERAL LEADERS WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED FOR THE PARTY'S FUTURE IN THE EVENT HELEN WERE TO LEAD THE PARTY IN NEXT YEAR'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, REFLECTING THIS CONERN, THE LIBERAL AFTERNOON PAPER EXPRESSEN ON AUGUST 17 CARRIED AN EDITORIAL CALLING FOR HELEN'S RESIGNATION.

4. SHOULD THE YOUTHFUL AHLMARK BE CHOSEN IN NOVEMBER AS HELEN'S SUCCESSOR, HE WOULD SEEM TO BE WELL QUALIFIED TO GIVE THE PARTY MORE OF THE "PROFILE" IT SO BADLY NEEDS. AHLMARK IS A BRILLIANT SPEAKER. KNOWN FOR HIS STRONG VIEWS AND A TENDENCY TOWARDS CONFRONTATION. HE HAS BEEN ACTIVE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUES, PARTICULARLY THE MID-EAST, IN WHICH HE HAS BEEN OUTSPOKENLY PRO-ISRAELI, SERVING AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE SWEDISH-ISRAELI SOCIETY. AS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF CUROPE, HE HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTING ON THE PLIGHT OF JEWS IN THE USSR. ALTHOUGH CRITICAL OF THE U.S. ROLE IN VIETNAM, AHLMARK HAS BEEN FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS THE U.S. AND IN 1967, PARTICIPATED IN THE HARVARD SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 STOCKH 04141 211330Z

5. WHOEVER IS SELECTED AS THE NEXT LIBERAL PARTY CHAIRMAN WILL HAVE TO MAKE A BASIC DECISION ON THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE PARTY. IN VIEW OF THE PARTY'S POOR SHOWING IN RECENT MONTHS, HELEN'S POLICY OF COLLABORATION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DISCREDITED, ALTHOUGH SOME PARTY ELEMENTS CONTINUE TO FAVOR IT. THE ELECTION OF A NEW LEADER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REVIVE DISCUSSION OF CLOSER LIBERAL COOPERATION

WITH THE OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES, AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE  
CENTER PARTY, WHOSE LEADER, THORBJORN FALLDIN, HAS INDICATED AN  
INTEREST IN DISCUSSING A POSSIBLE MERGER WITH THE LIBERALS.  
SHOULD AHLMARK BE SELECTED AS HELEN'S SUCCESSOR, IT IS  
DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE HELEN'S POLICY OF COOPERATION  
WITH THE PALME GOVERNMENT; BUT MERGER WITH THE CENTER ALSO  
APPEARS UNCERTAIN.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 AUG 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** WorrelSW  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STOCKH04141  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750289-0748  
**From:** STOCKHOLM  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750829/aaaaazlo.tel  
**Line Count:** 123  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** WorrelSW  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <09 OCT 2003 by WorrelSW>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LIBERAL LEADER RESIGNS  
**TAGS:** PINT, SW, LIBERAL PARTY, (HELEN, GUNNAR), (WEIDELY, PER AHLMARK)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006